

Message Text

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FOR COVEY FROM BROWN (S/PRS)

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SUBJECT: UPI STORY ON CRIMMINS' HUMAN RIGHTS SPEECH

FOLLOWING STORY (BY ROBERT E. SULLIVAN) WAS RUN BY UPI
DATELINE RIO DE JANEIRO ON NOVEMBER 25.

BEGIN QUOTE: A NEW DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS DEVELOPED
IN BRAZIL, WITH U.S. AMBASSADOR JOHN CRIMMINS COMING IN
FOR CRITICISM THURSDAY FOR QUOTING THE AMERICAN DECLARA-
TION OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE DEBATE HAS ALSO INVOLVED PRESIDENT ERNESTO GEISEL AND
THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE LATEST ROUND CAME IN A
SERIES OF LARGELY CRITICAL EDITORIALS THURSDAY ABOUT A
SPEECH MADE BY CRIMMINS AT A BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
TUESDAY IN THE INDUSTRIAL CITY OF BELO HORIZONTE.

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CRIMMINS SAID QUOTE NOTHING IS OF MORE IMPORTANCE IN THIS

WORLD THAN THE PROTECTION OF THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN,
UNQUOTE AND HE PARAPHRASED THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
WHERE IT SAYS THAT IF A GOVERNMENT BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE OF
THESE RIGHTS IT CAN BE OVERTHROWN.

THE FOLHA DE SAO PAULO SAID IN AN EDITORIAL: QUOTE THE
THEME CAN BE CONSIDERED, AT THE MOMENT, ANNOYING. UNQUOTE

COMMENTING ON CRIMMINS'OBSERVATION THAT THE DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE COULD IN SOME PLACES BE CONSIDERED QUOTE
PROVOCATIVE, SEDITIOUS, SUBVERSIVE, UNQUOTE THE FOLHA
ASKED IN A SEPARATE EDITORIAL, QUOTE MAYBE THE DIPLOMAT
SHOULD BE ASKED IF THE PEOPLE WHO HIS COUNTRY MASSACRED
DURING ALMOST A DECADE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WOULD ALSO HAVE
CONSIDERED IT QUOTE PROVOCATIVE, SEDITIOUS, SUBVERSIVE.
UNQUOTE. UNQUOTE

THE SAME NEWSPAPER SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS QUOTE
DISPLEASED UNQUOTE WITH THE SPEECH, BUT A GOVERNMENT
SPOKESMAN DECLINED COMMENT.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE BEGAN NOVEMBER 17 WHEN THE NATION-
AL CONFEDERATION OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS, ANGERED AT THE
KILLING OF TWO PRIESTS AND THE BRIEF KIDNAPPING OF A
BISHOP, PUBLICLY CRITICIZED QUOTE THE ABUSE OF POWER BY
THE STATE, ARBITRARY IMPRISONMEN S, TORTURE, AND THE
SUPPRESSION OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT. UNQUOTE.

THAT STATEMENT WAS FOLLOWED BY A PUBLIC DEBATE WITHIN THE
CHURCH ON WHETHER THE STATEMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN LEAKED
TO THE MEDIA BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 15 ELECTIONS, AS IT WAS
IN THE SOUTHERN STATES BY A MAVERICK BISHOP.

PRESIDENT GEISEL, WHO HAS NOT PUBLICLY COMMENTED ON THE
HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION SINCE HE HAS BEEN PRESIDENT, MADE
NO COMMENT ON THE BISHOPS' DOCUMENT.

BUT ON THE BRAZILIAN THANKSGIVING DAY, WHICH FALLS ONE
DAY BEFORE THE NORTH AMERICAN FEAST, JUSTICE MINISTER
ARMANDO FALCAO APPARENTLY REPLIED WHEN HE SPOKE SPECIFIC-
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LY IN THE NAME OF GEISEL ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

HE TOLD THE NATION IN A RADIO BROADCAST, QUOTE WHAT WE
ASPIRE TO IS A LIFE OF DIGNITY FOR OUR PEOPLE....IN THE
END, THE HUMAN DIGNITY WHICH IS THE CONTRIBUTION OF
CHRISTIANITY TO THE CIVILIZATION IN WHICH WE LIVE AND
WHOSE VALUES WE WANT TO PRESERVE ABOVE ALL CONTINGENCIES
AND SACRIFICES. UNQUOTE.

S. EMBASSY SPOKESMEN SAID THEY WERE SURPRIS:D AT THE
PUBLIC REACTION TO CRIMMINS' SPEECH AND SAID HE HAS GIVEN
ESSENTIALLY THE SAME OPINIONS SINCE THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR
BEGAN. END OF TEXT. ROBINSON

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